



Empowerment Scholarships Program

BTF lights the path to a brighter future through the gift of education for young women in Turkey!

OVERVIEW

At Bridge to Turkiye Fund (BTF), we run on the idea that when you “educate a girl, you educate a community.” Our *Empowerment Scholarships Program* supports educating and empowering girls from underserved regions in Turkey. Statistics demonstrate that girls’ education is one of the smartest and most cost-effective investments we can make. As a 100% volunteer run non-profit organization, BTF is devoted to mobilizing and generating philanthropic resources to benefit the most vulnerable segments of Turkish society. BTF collaborates with reputable NGOs and public universities in Turkey to select deserving students for these scholarships and ensure that 100% of the donations go directly to scholarships for these future leaders of change in Turkey.

Since its inception in 2003, BTF has supported hundreds of projects in Turkey totaling over **\$3,600,000** that has benefited underserved young students receive an education. BTF has changed the lives of **3,515** students (approximately \$1,600,000 in total investment funds) through its *Empowerment Scholarships Program* in the last 10+ years. Scholarship recipients have gone into fields of law, education, STEM, healthcare, and business and have shared their commitment to inspire change in future generations.

CHALLENGE

It is a widely published fact that education ensures the growth of civil society, democracy, global security, and political stability. Turkey is located in a prominent geographic position between Europe and Asia. Access to education has long since been a challenge for millions of girls who are located in remote areas of the country. According to the World Economic Group’s 2016 Global Gender Gap Report, Turkey ranked 130th out of 144 countries evaluated for gender equality. Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world and closing the gender gap can improve Turkey’s position globally. Despite the Turkish government’s efforts, many girls in Turkey still do not have the opportunity receive an education. This inequality creates a large disparity (2 to 1) in equal access to education for young girls compared to boys. Although primary school is mandatory, many children, particularly girls, are not enrolled due to “traditional beliefs” held by parents, according to the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI). This problem is prominent in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country, which are considerably more rural and impoverished. According to the UNGEI, the main obstacles to school attendance for girls in Turkey include a lack of school facilities and safe transportation, gender discrimination, low expectations from education, low quality of education and the cost associated with families sending their children to school. Millions of girls and young women from rural Turkey don’t receive the same quality education as their male counterparts, are unable to attend school regularly, and live in areas that are unsafe to travel to and from school.

Turkey has great potential for future economic growth but has much more work remaining to remove barriers to educating women and young girls and to establishing a more civic, democratic and engaged society. While the Turkish government has made significant progress in reducing the number of out-of-school girls in primary and secondary education in the past decade, large numbers of girls continue to dropout starting in high school and fewer still continue on to receive a university degree. It is estimated that of the 30 percent of incoming female students who enter universities, 40 percent drop out due to economic hardship.

SOLUTION

Educating girls is smart for all of us!

BTF focuses on providing scholarships to educate girls, because cycles of poverty and illiteracy can be broken in just one generation. Earning secondary and higher education is the door that leads to social and economic empowerment in many countries. Providing educational opportunities are also key to combatting early marriage, illiteracy, school dropouts, and low wages, which are common barriers faced by many girls as they try to receive an education. With access to proper educational resources and guidance, a girl can reshape her destiny. More importantly, providing education will make a difference now and for generations to come, giving women greater educational and economic opportunities.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Girls' education yields high returns not just for income and economic growth, but in other crucial areas as well—including improving children's and women's survival rates and health, reducing population growth, protecting children's rights and delaying child marriage, empowering women in the home and in the workplace, and improving climate change resilience. **To date, BTF has empowered more than 3,515 students through educational scholarships given primarily to disadvantaged girls.** Through the Global Giving community, we have the potential to reach 5,000 girls! These scholarships make a substantial difference in encouraging low-income families to send and keep their daughters in school and create better futures for themselves, their families and communities. As the economic barrier is removed, families see the value in ensuring their daughters are educated. Ultimately, these scholarships will help a new generation of educated women leaders serving as positive change makers in a society where every young girl will have the same opportunity to succeed and have the chance to live out her dreams.

In 1935, M. Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey, declared the importance of women's rights by stating *"I am convinced that the exercise of social and political rights by women is necessary for mankind's happiness and pride. You can rest assured that Turkish women together with the world's women will work towards world peace and security."*

At BTF, we pledge to embrace the wisdom that lies within these words and support the causes that empower a modern, democratic, stable, and secular Turkey. Thank you for your support of BTF's Empowerment Scholarships Program. To learn what you can do, please visit us at:

- <http://www.bridgetoturkiye.org>
- <http://www.bridgetoturkiye.org/light-the-path/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/bridgetoturkiye>

*BTF is a charitable 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with IRS Tax ID of 58-2678580.
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